

Avenues for further research

- Future research could focus on how organisations or other political parties prepared for the EP elections by examining their own point of view.
- A comparative analysis of the party press of other Member States could be undertaken in order to evaluate whether the themes raised were similar or different.
- It would be relevant to examine how the same party press presented and prepared for the second round of EP elections in 1984.

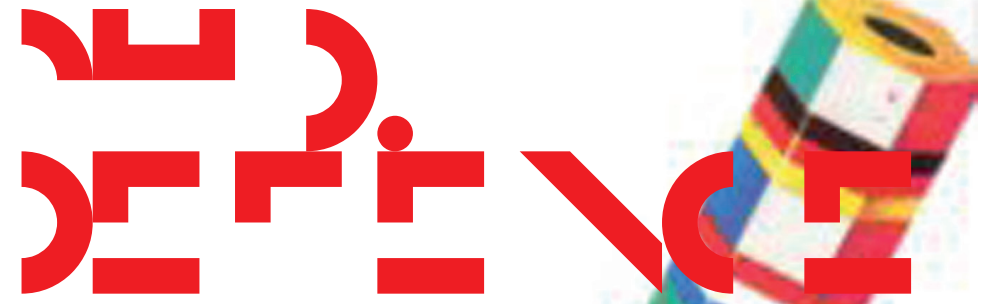
About Silvia Giulia Pirola

Silvia Giulia Pirola did her multidisciplinary studies in Italy, Denmark and Norway. She produced her PhD dissertation at the Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, where she has been part of the Modern Europe research programme and the project "Institutions of Democracy in Transition. Transnational fields in politics, administration and law in Denmark and Western Europe after 1945".



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MAKING SENSE OF EUROPE: COMPAGNI, AMICI AND THE FIRST DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 1969-1979

PhD dissertation by Silvia Giulia Pirola

10 giugno.
Elezioni per il Parlamento Europeo.
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MAKING SENSE OF EUROPE: COMPAGNI, AMICI AND THE FIRST DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EURO- PEAN PARLIAMENT, 1969-1979

Summary of the main points of PhD dissertation Making sense of Europe: Compagni, Amici and the first direct elections to the European Parliament, 1969-1979 by Silvia Giulia Pirola, Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University.

The dissertation focuses on the first parliamentary elections to the European Parliament, and how they were prepared in a long-time perspective from the main political parties of Italy.

Elections as a cultural practice

- Elections constitute a common tradition
EP elections constitute a key EU symbol because they promote the value of democracy, and an EU tradition, because they constitute a customary practice within all Member States. To explain this, my research applies the cluster of "Political myth – narrativisation – emblematic ritual".
- Elections are often studied in terms of either political campaign or voter turnout
These valid and interesting approaches neglect and under-estimate the two points raised above and tend to concentrate on a short time perspective. On the contrary, I concentrated on a longer time perspective to understand how the debate developed.

European Elections as Second Order Elections?

- Lack of academic interest
Great importance has been attributed to the first EP elections. Yet, little research concentrated neither on this specific election nor on the preparation for the EP elections in general.
- The national and the European perspectives
It is argued that the national level is the predominant one, and that European issues are and always have been neglected. My thesis show that reality is different. Europe matters.
- Italian politics and the question of Europe
All the main political parties were in favour of European integration, thus the national debate was not based on positive or negative attitudes towards the EP elections, but rather, it concentrated on how to implement this event in the best possible way.

New perspectives on elections to the European Parliament, political parties and Europe, and media and political communication to challenge knowledge of European integration

- I outlined how the realization of the first EP elections was neither simple nor unproblematic. Political parties constructed the event by identifying Europe as a source of help for Italy and for other Member States
- I shed light on the role and engagement of political parties in a significant European event and I demonstrated that party press endeavoured strongly to explain the European project.
- I presented the somewhat peculiar situation of the Italian media in the 1970s. I argued that the party press had not been given credibility as a subject of research neither in Italy nor in Europe

Conclusion

- The DC and the PCI press generally examined similar topics, themes and issues to prepare and to orchestrate the first EP elections. There were only few instances in which an issue was reported exclusively by the DC or the PCI press.
- The party press made a consistent effort in making sense of the first EP elections.
- In a period characterised by countless voting possibilities (early elections, regional elections, administrative elections), it can be argued that the EP elections presented some stability for the electorate.